

SENATE BILL 3159

By Miller

AN ACT to name the segment of U.S. Highway 411 in the City of Benton in honor of the late I.J. Wright.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should permanently commemorate the accomplishments of those statesmen who served this State with the greatest acumen and dedication; and

WHEREAS, the late I.J. Wright was a well-rounded gentleman who had served astutely in the diverse worlds of the military, agriculture, business, politics, and government; and

WHEREAS, throughout his illustrious tenure as Polk County Clerk, I.J. Wright served his fellow citizens with the utmost professionalism, probity, compassion, and integrity; he would often open the County Clerk's office after hours to better serve the needs of those hard working citizens who couldn't make it to the Courthouse during normal business hours; and

WHEREAS, a man of outstanding character who dearly loved God, his country, and his family, Mr. Wright served the good people of Polk County for twelve years as their County Clerk, always working with purpose and conviction to establish a brighter future for his fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, answering the call of his country to military service, Mr. Wright distinguished himself as an exemplary military leader in the United States Army during World War II; he attained the rank of First Lieutenant and would have certainly been promoted to Captain if he had remained in the Army after the conclusion of the war; and

WHEREAS, I.J. Wright served in the U.S. Army's 26th Infantry Division under the legendary General George Patton during World War II; he earned four Battle Stars for his intrepid service in the Battle of the Bulge, Battle of Northern France, Battle of Ardennes, and the Battle of Rhineland; and

WHEREAS, First Lieutenant Wright and his men took control of the Lindendoff Bridge across the Rhine River in Remagen, Germany, and his unit was thus instrumental in the final collapse of the German Army; and

WHEREAS, like all great military leaders, First Lieutenant Wright adhered to the philosophy that he would not send his men into territory where he would not go himself; on several occasions, he was cut off from his men while on patrol, and on one occasion, he was believed to be dead, but he survived to live an honorable life filled with patriotism and public service; and

WHEREAS, during his distinguished military career, I.J. Wright was awarded the Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, European, African, and Middle Eastern Services Medal, American Defense Services Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal; and

WHEREAS, after completing his military service, Mr. Wright returned to his native Polk County, where he would settle down to enjoy a long and fruitful life as a loving family man, farmer, businessman, and County Clerk; and

WHEREAS, until his passing in 1987, I. J. Wright played an important role in making Tennessee an even better place to live, and his bountiful life of purpose and commitment should be permanently commemorated by this General Assembly; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, that segment of U.S. Highway 411 within the corporate limits of the City of Benton, Polk County is hereby designated the "First Lieutenant I.J. Wright Memorial Parkway" as a lasting tribute to one of the most outstanding soldiers, citizens and public servants this State has ever produced.

SECTION 2. The department of transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the segment of U.S. Highway 411 described in Section 1 as the "First Lieutenant I.J. Wright Memorial Parkway".

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. The appellation "First Lieutenant I.J. Wright Memorial Parkway" provided for in this act is for honorary purposes only, and nothing contained herein shall be construed as requiring the alteration of any address, or the governmental system for assigning addresses, in any county, municipality, or other governmental entity affected by this act.

SECTION 6. Nothing contained in this act shall be construed as requiring the alteration of any previously named segment or segments of any highway described in this act as the "First Lieutenant I.J. Wright Memorial Parkway".

SECTION 7. This act shall become operative only if the cost of the manufacture and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within one (1) year of the effective date of this act. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the manufacture or installation of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such signs within thirty (30) days of the erection of such signs. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

SECTION 8. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.